

sent off to Khanbalik to the foot of the throne. Should he have a year's journey to get there still he must never be allowed to halt till he reaches the capital.¹

"At last the ambassadors were led in front of the throne and placed some fifteen ells from it. An Amir kneeling read a paper in the Cathayan language, stating all about the ambassadors to the following effect: Certain deputies, sent by his majesty Shah Rukh and his sons, have come from a distant country with presents for the Emperor, and present themselves in order to strike the ground with their foreheads before him." His worship Hajji Yusuf the Kazi, who was one of the Amirs of a tuman (or commandants of ten thousand) and one of the officers attached to the person of the Emperor, as well as chief of one of the twelve imperial councils, came forward accompanied by several Musulmans acquainted with the languages. They said to the ambassadors: 'First prostrate yourselves and then touch the ground three times with your heads.' Accordingly the envoys bent their heads, but without absolutely touching the ground; then raising both hands they presented the letters of his majesty Shah Rukh, of his Highness Baisangar, and of the other princes and amirs, each of which was folded in a piece of yellow satin. For it is a law among the people of Cathay that everything intended for the Emperor must be wrapt in a piece of some yellow stuff. His worship the Kazi advanced, took the letters, and handed them to an eunuch who stood before the throne; the eunuch carried them to the Emperor, who received them, opened them, and glanced at them, and then gave them back to the eunuch."

After some trivial questions the emperor remarked that they had had a long journey, and dismissed them to take some refreshments. After having done so in an adjoining court they were conducted to the Yamkhana or hostelry, where they found everything handsomely provided for them.

Next morning, *before daylight*, they were summoned by the officer called the *Sejnin* (or *Sekjin*),² who had charge of them, to get up and come in haste to the palace, as a banquet was to be given them by the emperor; but this affords nothing of much interest.

"On the 17th of the month of Dhulhajja (23rd December, 1420), several criminals were sent to the place of execution. According to the

¹ This was no doubt a misunderstanding, but it is the Chinese law (not we may presume the practice, at least in troubled times) that every capital sentence must be confirmed by a special court at the capital, composed of members of the six great Boards of Administration and of three great Courts of Justice (see *Chine Moderne*, pp. 230, 256). The presentation of the ambassadors along with criminals for sentence was characteristic. In Burma, even the ambassadors of China are subjected to analogous slight (see *Mission to Ava*, p. 76).

² The former in Quatremère, the latter in Astley. The word is (Chin). *Sse-jin*, "a Palace-man or Eunuch" (see *Journ. Asiat.*, s. iv, tom. ii, 435).